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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the following remarks.

There is no additional fee for this Amendment because the total number of claims and the total number of independent claims has not changed.

Request for Telephone Interview

Applicant urges that the subject U.S. patent application is now in condition for allowance. Should any issue require additional discussion, Applicant urges the Examiner to contact the undersigned.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-10, 14, 16-20 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Capodieci, U.S. Patent 6,231,330, in view of Maniak et al., U.S. Patent 6,953,596. Claim 11 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Capodieci in view of Maniak et al. and Hara et al., U.S. Patent 3,932,231. Claim 13 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Capodieci in view of Maniak et al.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections as Applicant invented the claimed invention prior to 18 September 2002. Therefore the cited art is not prior art to the Applicant's claimed invention. Applicant has included a

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Declaration of Roberto CAPODIECI under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 and notes from a meeting describing the invention in support of prior inventorship. Applicant notes that this Declaration is timely under MPEP § 715.09(A) as prior to a final rejection.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the above Amendment and remarks address each and every issue raised by the Examiner and overcome each and every objection and rejection. However, should the Examiner detect any remaining issue, Applicant kindly requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned, preferably by telephone, in an effort to expedite examination of this Patent Application.

Applicant sincerely believes that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully requests early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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